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ABSTRACT

Two of the annual collective biographical resources, "Current Biography Yearbook" and "Newsmakers," which are frequently available in the reference departments of public libraries, were compared. The purpose of the study was to determine if relationships existed between the work and the variables of gender, race, geographic setting, and also, if relationships existed between the variables of occupation and gender, and occupation and race within each biographical work. It was found that "Current Biography Yearbook" covered 808 biographical subjects and "Newsmakers" covered 745 between the years of 1991-1995. Two-hundred and six biographical subjects were found in both works, leaving 602 (75%) unduplicated biographies in "Current Biography Yearbook" and 539 (72%) in "Newsmakers." Males made up 74% of the subjects in "Current Biography Yearbook" and females 26%. In "Newsmakers," 67.9% of the subjects were male and 32.1% were female. For both works, biographical subjects were most likely to be white and from the United States. The largest occupation group in "Current Biography Yearbook" and "Newsmakers" was government/politics. High percentages of males were found in the occupations of sports and business, and high percentages of females were found in the occupation of writing. Although the black group had the second largest number of subjects, blacks were more likely to represent the sports occupation. A comparison of the 1991 and 1995 volumes of "Current Biography Yearbook" in the areas of gender and race/ethnic group indicated that more women and minorities are being included over time. Eleven tables present comparisons according to gender, race and occupation. (Contains 18 references.) (Author/AEF)

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A COMPARISON OF CURRENT BIOGRAPHY YEARBOOK AND NEWSMAKERS IN THE AREAS OF MULTICULTURALISM, GENDER BALANCE AND OCCUPATION

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Kimberly S. Faux

July, 1996

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Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers, were studied to compare coverage of the following variables: gender, race/ethnic group, geographical setting and occupation. It was found that Current Biography Yearbook covered 808 biographical subjects and Newsmakers covered 745 between the years of 1991-1995. Two-hundred and six biographical subjects were found in both works, leaving 602 (75%) unduplicated biographies in Current Biography Yearbook and 539 (72%) in Newsmakers. Males made up 74% of the subjects in Current Biography Yearbook and females 26%. In Newsmakers, 67.9% of the subjects were male and 32.1% were female. For both works, biographical subjects were most likely to be white and from the United States. The largest occupation group in Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers was government/politics. High percentages of males were found in the occupations of sports and business, and high percentages of females were found in the occupation of writing. Although the black group had the second largest number of subjects, blacks were more likely to represent the sports occupation, rather than the most popular occupation overall, government/politics. A comparison of the 1991 and 1995 volumes of Current Biography Yearbook in the areas of gender and race/ethnic group indicated that more women and minorities are being included over time.

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I. Introduction

In 1992, the Census Bureau report predicted that minority populations in the United States will grow in large proportions. In fact, by the year 2050, the bureau predicted that the Hispanic population will increase from 9% of the total American population in 1992 to 21% in 2050. Asian/Pacific Islanders will increase from 3% of the population in 1992 to 11% in 2050. Also, the African-American population will increase 4% to make up 16% of the population by the year 2050. Meanwhile, the white population which consisted of 75% of the total population in 1992, will decrease to 53% by the year 2050 (Carton 1993, 3). The population shifts that are occurring will continue to occur, and will have a large impact on the population served by American public libraries.

In addition to recognizing population shifts, libraries must acknowledge the fact that racial relations in America are much less than ideal. According to a telephone poll conducted by the New York Times and CBS news in 1993, only 37% of the Americans surveyed considered race relations in America to be good. Only 52% of Americans believed that there have been improvements in race relations in the last 25 years (Josey 1995, 46).

In order to deal with the population shifts, the racial tension and the increasing awareness of multiculturalism, the American Library Association published the "Minority Concerns Policy" in 1990. The policy "recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing racial and ethnic diversity among Americans" (Moses 1990, 16). Ten objectives are provided within this policy in order to guide

American libraries in promoting services for the nation's four ethnic minority groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans. The second objective specifically calls for the promotion of "the publication, production, and purchase of print and non-print materials that present positive role models of cultural minorities" (Moses 1990, 16). This objective seems to lend itself well to the selection of biographical material, individual and collective.

Lester Asheim is quoted as saying "the practice of book selection ... is [where] we exert, however indirectly, our greatest influence on the public we serve" (Harmon 1987, 303). Biographical works that are selected to represent a diverse population perform a dual function. First, they enlighten library users of all racial and gender groups about the contributions of particular groups. Second, with a diverse collection, users will be able to seek out role models that they can relate to because of a common bond, based on ethnicity, race or gender (Bostic 1995). Both children and adults are well served by collections that represent the diverse ethnic and racial groups that make up the United States.

Research has shown that in the past, libraries have not done an adequate job of collecting materials that will effectively serve the diverse community of America, particularly in the areas of biographical information and reference works. Studies by William C. Robinson and Timothy R. Diamond pointed out that the majority of biographies reviewed in Library Journal and Booklist, two sources frequently used to aid in the selection of library books, tended to be about white male biographical subjects (Diamond 1991). Similar studies were conducted by Virginia Witucke on the subject of children's biographies. Her results, like those of Robinson and Diamond, indicated that women and minorities were underrepresented in children's biographical works (Witucke 1985). Dixie Howse James compared the composition of the students of a particular public library with the library collection

and found that the percentages of ethnic/minority groups and the percentages of males and females did not correspond to the percentages of biographical books that were available to students for their use (James 1993). An annual collective biographical reference source known as Current Biography Yearbook was found to consist mostly of biographies about white males in both 1970 and 1991 (Martinez 1993). June L. Engle and Elizabeth Futas investigated encyclopedias and found them to favor men over women in the treatment of historical subjects (Engle and Futas 1983).

As the previous studies indicate, libraries are not meeting the challenge of providing culturally diverse collections for their patrons, nor are they providing an equal balance between male and female subjects. Biographical information tends to be centered on white male subjects. Witucke suggests supplementing biography collections with information that can be found in reference materials and periodicals (Witucke 1981), but as the studies also indicate, the reference sources that have been analyzed also seem to concentrate biographical efforts on white male subjects. No studies were found that dealt specifically with biographical subjects in periodicals. The inability to provide biographical information on people due to their ethnicity or gender creates "problems in providing role models for readers" and "also does the majority population a disservice by denying it the opportunity to gain information and insights" that can be gained by reading biography (Robinson 1990, 551). The importance of continuing assessment in order to insure that library collections are meeting the needs of patrons is affirmed by Bostic in her article on library acquisitions (Bostic 1995).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to compare and evaluate two of the annual

collective biographical resources, Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers, which are frequently available in the reference departments in public libraries. These biographical sources were referred to generically as "works." Five consecutive volumes (1991-1995) were compared to determine if relationships existed between the work and the selected variables of gender, race, geographic setting, occupation, and also, if relationships existed between the variables of occupation and gender, and occupation and race within each biographical work. These two biographical sources were also examined to determine the overlap in biographical subject coverage for the five years studied. Current Biography Yearbook 1991 was also compared to the 1995 volume to determine if the changes had occurred in the selection of subjects.

Limitations of the study

The data gathered for this study was limited only to the five years studied for the collective biographical sources Newsmakers and Current Biography Yearbook. The contents of these collective biographical works were analyzed in relation to the coverage of gender, race, occupation and geographic setting of biographical subjects. The overall quality of the works was not evaluated. The results are limited to these two sources and are not necessarily generalizable to all biographical reference sources.

II. Literature Review

Only one study was found that dealt specifically with the subjects included in the collective biographical source Current Biography Yearbook. This study was completed by Dolores A. Martinez in 1993 with the purpose of analyzing the gender, race/ethnic group, occupation and geographic setting of the individuals included in Current Biography Yearbook in the years of 1970 and 1991. The individual biographies making up these two volumes were also compared in order to determine whether or not twenty-one years and an increase in the minority population would cause the producers of Current Biography Yearbook to include more biographies on minorities. Her findings indicated that the majority of the individual biographies was likely to be about white males, mainly involved in politics or writing careers from the United States. This was apparent in both the 1970 and the 1991 volumes. She did find that in 1991 there was an increase in the number of biographies about women and Blacks, although it was a minimal percentage (3%). Martinez concluded that efforts by the American Library Association which have been set forth in publications such as the "Minority Concerns Policy" (Moses 1990), as well as the increase in the awareness of multicultural issues over the last five years, which have been increasingly indexed in Library Literature, will effectively pressure biographical producers into more complete coverage of ethnic groups and minorities (Martinez 1993).

Other studies analyzed biographical subjects in books based on variables such

as gender, occupation, race/ethnicity. A study was conducted by Virginia Witucke with the purpose of investigating the subjects of children's biographies. By using citations and reviews, she analyzed the subjects of 100 biographies published in 1978 in regards to occupation, historical era, and nationality. She was also interested in whether the books were biographical or autobiographical and which ones were part of a series. Her results indicated that children's biographies were most often about contemporary people, with the majority about sports figures. Other popular occupations included entertainment and government. She also found that only 5% of the books were autobiographical and that many (over 50%) were part of a publisher biographical series. Out of the 100 biographies, 72 were read in order to further analyze them in aspects such as illustrations, authors, amount of research and common themes. She determined that the biographies created for children in 1978 were inadequate due to the small range of people and occupations that were covered. Witucke also cautioned librarians against the purchase of trendy children's biographies that will become out of date and useless in the near future (Witucke 1981).

Witucke conducted a similar study five years later to see if a change had occurred in the subjects of children's biography. In this study, Witucke analyzed eighty books published in 1983 in a manner similar to that of the 1978 study. Her results indicated improvements in the choice of subjects based on lasting contributions to society as opposed to the trendy subjects which were the majority in 1978. She also found that, rather than entertainers and sports figures as the main focus of biographies, the coverage of crusaders and scientists/inventors had increased significantly. Gender and race of the subjects were also included in this study for both 1978 and 1983. Witucke found that the amount of female biographical subjects increased from 25% in 1978 to 31% in 1983. The amount of black

biographical subjects decreased from 23% in 1978 to 18% in 1983. Native American subject coverage also decreased from 5% in 1978 to less than 3% in 1983. Hispanics were underrepresented in both years studied. Witucke commented that the lack of trendy subjects in 1983 as compared to 1978 was possibly due to librarians resisting the purchase of such works. She went on to say that information about contemporary biographical subjects is "best found" in periodicals (Witucke 1981, 50).

Adult biographies have been studied similarly by William C. Robinson and Timothy R. Diamond. Robinson's study, which was conducted in 1988, analyzed the biographies that were reviewed in Library Journal in the years 1960 and 1980 to determine if there was any change over time regarding the subjects' gender, racial/ethnic background, occupation or nationality. Robinson found that there was little change from 1960 to 1980 in the coverage of females. In the 1960s, reviews of biographies included 78% on male subjects and in the 1980s, 74% were on male subjects. Little change was noted in the race/ethnic group of the biographical subjects covered. Robinson found that in both the 1960's and the 1980's, 94% of adult biographies reviewed were about white people. The occupations of the subjects were found to be similarly represented in both decades with authors and political leaders as the major occupations represented. Robinson concluded that a typical biography found in a library was likely to be about an American white male. Robinson also said that in addition to the lack of biographical role models for men and women who may not be of American descent, the majority population is disserviced "by denying it the opportunity to gain information and insight from reading biography that might remove stereotypes and illustrate the similarities of the human condition" (Robinson 1990, 551).

Diamond used the same process in his study to investigate another popular reviewing source used by librarians to select biographies for purchase,

Booklist. Like Robinson, Diamond compared reviews in the 1960's to those of the 1980's. The result of this study was similar to that of Robinson's, indicating that individual biographies were likely to be about white American males. Minorities, females and people from under-developed and third world countries were all underrepresented. Diamond echoed Robinson in saying that the reviewed biographies present an inaccurate view of our society and the contributions that people are making. According to Diamond, librarians should be responsible for seeking out biographical works that represent all people in our society, whether or not they are reviewed in one of the popular reviewing sources (Diamond 1991).

Dixie Howse James also conducted a biographical subject study entitled Ethnic Diversity and Gender in the Middle Level Biography Collection. This study investigated two library collections: that of a public library and a public school library serving the same community. For the variables of gender and ethnic group, James compared the percentages of biographies in the library collections to the percentages of the actual population of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Howse found the biography collection inadequate in providing materials based on both gender and ethnicity. It was determined that even if the collections were combined, female students would be underrepresented in the percentage of biographies based on female role models. Females made up 52% of the population and were to be served by 42% of the total collection. The black population of students was also underrepresented. While 28% of the population was black, biographies based on black subjects comprised only 24% of the collections combined. Like some other researchers, Howse claims that librarians have an important role, that of selecting quality biographical works that represent both genders and diverse cultures. She cautions against the selection of the "same old tired biographees," which may appear as new multicultural material (James 1993, 54).

One other study completed by June L. Engle and Elizabeth Futas did not examine biographies, but the encyclopedia, a reference source often used for biographical information. The researchers wanted to determine if the encyclopedias treated women in a stereotypical and discriminatory manner, both in the selection and the presentation of subjects. They selected ten encyclopedias to evaluate the inclusion/exclusion rate of a sample of men and women, the use of language and the use of illustrations. They found that in all but one encyclopedia, the articles based on male subjects were longer than those on women. For a selected set of topics it was found that named individuals were more often male than female, except in the categories of women's liberation movement, women's suffrage and nursing. It was also only in these three topics that more women were represented in the illustrations accompanying the text. Engle and Futas also found the language used in reference to women to be stereotypical and sexist. The researchers concluded that these findings suggest "that the contributions of women have been minimal" and that as far as the topics studied were considered, they "are not fields where women have equal opportunity for achievement" (Engle and Futas 1983, 37).

To summarize, studies have been conducted on biographical sources of information, including book reviewing periodicals, encyclopedias, a collective biographical work, and children's biographical books. The results of these studies indicate that biographical sources of information often found in libraries tend to concentrate on subjects that are white males living in the United States who are known for careers in the fields of politics and writing. The numbers of females and minorities in the studied biographical sources are small when compared to actual population figures. These studies also indicate that publishers are making an effort to include biographical subjects that represent the gender balanced and diverse world that we live in.

III. Methodology

Data was collected using the content analysis method. For both Newsmakers and Current Biography Yearbook, the data collection consisted of analyzing each biography in five consecutive volumes for the years 1991 through 1995. For this study, biographical information that dealt with more than one person in a single biographical entry was not included, so that all biographies in this study were about single persons. Also, biographies of fictional characters were not included. Obituaries were also excluded. For each individual biography the following data were gathered :

1. Name of subject
2. Gender of subject
3. Race/ethnic group of subject
4. Geographic setting of subject
5. Occupation of subject

The names of the subjects were compared in order to determine the amount of overlapping coverage between Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers. The collected data were tabulated individually for each work and compiled into tables in order to make comparisons between the two sources. Percentage results from this study were compared to the results of similar studies in order to determine if similar patterns existed. In order to determine the presence of relationships between the variable of work with the variables of gender, race/ethnic group, geographic setting and occupation the chi square test was used. This test was also used to determine if relationships existed between the variables of gender and

occupation, and race and occupation for both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers. Also, the data for Current Biography Yearbook 1995 was compared to Current Biography Yearbook 1991 (a portion of the sample used by Martinez in the paper entitled The Subjects of Current Biography Yearbook in 1970 and 1991 : Does Cultural Change Show Difference?) in order to determine if the 1995 volume covered more ethnically/racially diverse and gender balanced personalities than the 1991 volume.

IV. Findings

Characteristics of the sample

Two collective biographical works, Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers, were examined in order to create the population for this study. Although the publishers of these works have a similar goal, that of providing up to date, accurate biographies of noteworthy personalities, it is interesting to note the wording of this goal as stated in each work. The preface of Current Biography Yearbook states the goal as providing the user with "brief, objective, accurate, and well-documented biographical articles about living leaders in all fields of human accomplishment the world over" (Current Biography Yearbook 1991, Introduction). In Newsmakers the goal is expressed in the introduction as, to provide "informative profiles of the world's most interesting people in a a crisp, concise, contemporary format" (Newsmakers 1991, xi). It should be noted that both of these sources include photographs for most entries, bibliographies for all entries, and as a rule, the biographies are about living people.

The sample for this study consisted of five consecutive years, 1991-1995, for both collective biographical works. The total number of subjects included in the Current Biography Yearbook sample numbered 808, and in the Newsmakers sample, 745.

For the five years studied, 206 biographical subjects were found in both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers. This left 602 unduplicated

biographies in Current Biography Yearbook, or 75% of the total subjects, and 539 unduplicated biographies in Newsmakers, or 72% of the total subjects. All biographies, even if duplicated, were included in this study in order to make comparisons between these two sources.

Gender of Biographical Subjects

In the Current Biography Yearbook sample 598 (74%) of the subjects were male and 210 (26%) of the subjects were female. Male biographies outnumbered female biographies in the Newsmakers sample with 506 (67.9%) male subjects and 239 (32.1%) female subjects. A summary of these findings can be found in Table 1. It was determined that a significant relationship does exist between the variables of work and gender through the use of the chi square test (chi square=6.99: degrees of freedom=1: p=.00: sample size=1553).

Table 1. --Gender of Biographical Subjects, by Work.

Work	Gender	Number	Percentage
Current Biography Yearbook	Male	598	74.00
	Female	210	26.00
Total		808	100.00
Newsmakers	Male	506	67.90
	Female	239	32.10
Total		745	100.00

These findings are similar to those of other studies in that male biographies outnumbered those of females. The results of Martinez' study showed that annual volumes of Current Biography Yearbook in 1970 and in 1991 contained high percentages of male biographies, 82.7% and 77%, respectively (Martinez 1993, 18).

Robinson found that a majority of biographical books reviewed were about male subjects and made up 78% in the 1960s and 74% in the 1980s (Robinson 1990, 547). Diamond found that male subjects numbered 702 (80%) in reviewed biographies in the 1960's and 801 (73%) in the 1980's (Diamond 1991, 17). Witucke found in her 1978 study that male subjects made up 75%, and in the 1983 study, 69% of the subjects were male (Witucke 1985, 46). James found that male biographies in the library and school collection combined numbered 1273 (80%) (James 1993, 41). Engle and Futas found that male subjects received longer encyclopedia entries than women (Engle & Futas 1983, 31).

Race/Ethnic Group of Biographical Subjects

The majority of subjects in both biographical sources was white. In Current Biography Yearbook white subjects numbered 632 (78.2%) and in Newsmakers 594 (79.7%). A numeric breakdown of non-white subjects included in Current Biography Yearbook is as follows: black subjects 122 (15.1%), Asians 23 (2.8%), Hispanics 14 (1.7%), Arabs 10 (1.2%), Pakistani/Indians 5 (.6%), Native Americans 2 (.2%). A similar breakdown follows for the subjects included in Newsmakers: black subjects 97 (13.0%), Hispanics 22 (3.0%), Asians 17 (2.3%), Arabs 7 (.9%), Pakistani/Indians 5 (.7%), and Native Americans 3 (4%). Through the use of the chi square test it was determined that neither of these sources was more likely to cover a larger number of subjects in particular racial/ethnic groups since there was not a significant relationship between the variables of work and race. A summary of these findings can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. --Race/Ethnic Group of Biographical Subjects, by Work.

Work	Race/Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
Current Biography Yearbook	White	632	78.20
	Black	122	15.10
	Asian	23	2.80
	Hispanic	14	1.70
	Arab	10	1.20
	Pakistani/Indian	5	.60
	Native American	2	.20
Total		808	100.00
Newsmakers	White	594	79.70
	Black	97	13.00
	Hispanic	22	3.00
	Asian	17	2.30
	Arab	7	.90
	Pakistani/Indian	5	.70
	Native American	3	.40
Total		745	100.00

These percentages were similar to the results of other studies that have been conducted to determine the racial/ethnic make up of biographical samples, and were also found to be predominately white. Martinez found that white subjects numbered 161 (87.02%) in 1970 and 135 (83.85%) in 1991 (Martinez 1993, 19). James found a high number of biographical books that were about white subjects 803 (82%) in comparison with the white population of the school 617 (66%). On the other hand, the number of black students was 260 (28%), while the number of black biographical subjects numbered only 101 (10%). Other minority groups were found to be better served by the biography collection (James 1993, 42). Robinson and Diamond found the highest percentage of white subjects in their studies of book review subjects. In the 1960s and the 1980s, Robinson found that 94% of the subjects were white, and Diamond found that white subjects numbered 829 (94.31%) in the 1960's and 987 (89.48%) in the 1980s (Diamond 1991, 20). In her study of children's

biographies, Witucke also found that the majority of the subjects was white (Witucke 1985, 46).

Geographic Setting of Biographical Subjects

In both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers the majority of biographical subjects was from the United States. The number of subjects in Current Biography Yearbook from the United States was 597 (73.9%). The next three largest geographic settings for biographical subjects were as follows: United Kingdom 59 (7.3%), Western Europe 55 (6.8%), and Asia 21 (2.6%). In Newsmakers, 616 (82.7%) of the subjects lived in the United States. The next three numerous geographic settings for subjects were as follows: United Kingdom 33 (4.4%), Western Europe 28 (3.8%), and Africa 15 (2.0%). Table 3 provides a summary of these findings. The result of the chi square test for the variables of work and geographic setting points to a significant relationship between these variables (chi square=28.00; degrees of freedom=10; p=.00; sample size=1553).

These findings were similar to other biographical subject studies in that the majority of the subjects was geographically located in the United States. Martinez found 135 (72.97%) of the subjects in 1970 and 120 (74.53%) of the subjects in 1991 lived in the United States (Martinez 1993, 21). In the Robinson and Diamond studies there was also a majority of United States subjects although the numbers were not as great. Robinson found 648 (52%) of the subjects in the 1960s and 738 (67%) in the 1980s were from the United States (Robinson 1990, 548). Diamond found 454 (51.65%) subjects in the 1960s and 745 (67.55%) subjects in the 1980s resided in the United States (Diamond 1991, 21).

Table 3.--Geographic Setting of Biographical Subjects, by Work.

Work	Geographic Setting	Number	Percentage
Current Biography Yearbook	United States	597	73.90
	United Kingdom	59	7.30
	Western Europe	55	6.80
	Asia	21	2.60
	Eastern Europe	19	2.40
	Africa	17	2.10
	Canada	14	1.70
	Middle East	11	1.40
	Australia	6	0.70
	Latin America	6	0.70
	West Indies	3	0.40
Total		808	100.00
Newsmakers	United States	616	82.70
	United Kingdom	33	4.40
	Western Europe	28	3.80
	Africa	15	2.00
	Asia	13	1.70
	Latin America	12	1.60
	Canada	11	1.50
	Eastern Europe	8	1.10
	Middle East	6	0.80
	Australia	1	0.10
Total		745	100.00

Occupation of Biographical Subjects

In both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers the most popular occupation was government and politics, which consisted of 149 (18.4%) subjects in Current Biography Yearbook and 124 (16.6%) in Newsmakers. The category with the second highest amount of subjects in Current Biography Yearbook was writing with 114 (14.1%) subjects. In Newsmakers the number of subjects involved in the writing occupation numbered 37, making up only 5% of the total Newsmakers subjects. It should be noted that Newsmakers is published by Gale Research, the company also

responsible for the Contemporary Authors series. This may explain the low percentage of writing subjects that was found in Newsmakers. Other occupations that were highly represented in Current Biography Yearbook included: music 90 (11.1%) subjects, and acting 84 (10.4%) subjects. In Newsmakers, occupations represented by a large number of subjects included: acting 103 (13.8%) subjects, sports 97 (13.0%) subjects, and music 71 (9.5%) subjects. Through the use of the chi square test, it was determined that there is a significant relationship between the variables of work and occupation (chi square=95.62; degrees of freedom=20; p=.00; sample size=1553). According to these figures it seemed more likely to find an author in Current Biography Yearbook rather than Newsmakers since 114 (14.1%) subjects in Current Biography Yearbook were writers and only 37 (5.0%) of the subjects were writers in Newsmakers. Also, it should be noted that in the five years studied, Newsmakers did not have any biographies in the occupation of historian. In Current Biography Yearbook five historians were included between 1991 and 1995. Other occupational categories may be more likely to be found in either Current Biography Yearbook or Newsmakers although the strength of those relationships was not determined in this study. Tables 4 and 5 summarize the findings about occupations.

Table 4.--Occupation of Biographical Subjects, Current Biography Yearbook.

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Government/Politics	149	18.40
Writing	114	14.10
Music	90	11.10
Acting	84	10.40
Sports	60	7.40
Science	54	6.70
Film/stage	51	6.30
Business	46	5.70
Journalism	30	3.70
Organization	24	3.00
Entertainer	20	2.50
Art	18	2.20
Medicine	13	1.60
Design	11	1.40
Law	8	1.00
Dance	7	.90
Education	7	.90
Cartooning	7	.90
Religious	5	.60
Photographer	5	.60
Historian	5	.60
Total	808	100.00

Table 5. --Occupation of Biographical Subjects, Newsmakers.

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Government/Politics	124	16.60
Acting	103	13.80
Sports	97	13.00
Music	71	9.50
Business	59	7.90
Entertainer	39	5.20
Writing	37	5.00
Science	31	4.20
Journalism	30	4.00
Art	27	3.60
Film/stage	23	3.10
Organization	20	2.70
Religious	17	2.30
Education	14	1.90
Design	12	1.60

Table 5. --Continued.

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Law	12	1.60
Dance	9	1.20
Medicine	7	0.90
Cartooning	7	0.90
Photographer	6	0.80
	745	100.00

Martinez found that in the 1970 volume of Current Biography Yearbook the occupation group with the most subjects was the government and politics group with 33 (17.84%) subjects, writing with 21 (11.35%) subjects was the next largest occupation, followed by acting and music, both with 15 (8.11%) subjects (Martinez 1993, 17). Robinson found that biographical books reviewed in the 1960s were mostly about subjects involved in writing with 296 (24%) subjects, followed by politics with 221 (18%) subjects, religious with 94 (8%) subjects and entertainment with 72 (6%) subjects. In the 1980s, politicians were the most numerous of all occupations with 293 (25%) subjects, followed by writers with 278 (23%) subjects, military/naval with 85 (7%) subjects and scholars with 59 (5%) subjects (Robinson 1990, 549). Diamond found the largest number of biographical subjects from book reviews during the 1960s to be involved in politics with 199 (22.64%) subjects, followed by writing with 175 (19.91%) subjects, religion with 69 (7.85%) subjects, and military with 46 (5.23%) subjects. From the 1980s sample, Diamond found the most popular occupations to be writing with 242 (21.94%) subjects, politics with 123 (11.15%) subjects, music with 93 (8.43%) subjects, and acting with 82 (7.43%) subjects (Diamond 1991, 23-24). Witucke found that the occupations with the largest percentages in children's biographical works were sports (37%), entertainment (18%), and politics (14%)

(Witucke 1979, 158). In her follow up study she found that sports (24%) and politics (18%) were once again the most popular occupations, but science (14%) replaced entertainment (9%) as the third most popular occupation (Witucke 1985, 46).

Occupation and Gender of Biographical Subjects

Current Biography Yearbook

Using the chi square test, it was determined that there is a significant relationship between the variables of occupation and gender in Current Biography Yearbook (chi square=50.96; degrees of freedom=20; p=.00; sample size=808). In every occupation, with the exception of education, male subjects outnumbered the female subjects. This seems logical since male subjects make up 74.0% of the total sample. Likewise, with such a large percentage of males making up the total population, the percentages of male subjects in the assigned occupations follow a similar pattern as the total sample, which was described previously in Table 4. The occupations with the largest numbers of male subjects in Current Biography Yearbook were as follows: government/politics 125 (20.9%), writing 74 (12.4%), music 64 (10.7%), and sports 54 (9.0%). The largest numbers of female subjects fell into the following occupations: writing 40 (19.0%), acting 31 (14.8%), music 26 (12.4%), and government/politics 24 (11.4%). It should also be noted that no female biographies were found in the occupation category of religious. Table 6 provides a description of these figures.

These findings vary from the previous studies of Robinson, Diamond and Martinez. Robinson found that in the 1960s, the most popular occupations for females were: author with 92 (34%) subjects, wife with 35 (13%) subjects, entertainer with 21 (8%) subjects, religious with 21 (8%) subjects (Robinson 1990, 549). In the Diamond study of female subjects from the 1960s, the most popular occupations

were: wife/mistress/mother/daughter/or sister etc. of a famous male with 35 (20%) subjects, writing with 32 (18%) subjects, aristocrat/wealthy society woman with 22 (12%) subjects, religion with 19 (11%) subjects (Diamond 1991, 24-25). It should be noted that while a relatively high percentage of female biographical subjects of the 1960s were involved in a religious occupation in the Robinson and Diamond studies, no women were involved in the religious occupation from the years 1991-1995 in Current Biography Yearbook. Martinez found the most representative occupations for women in 1970 to be: acting with 7 (21.87%) subjects, government/politics with 6 (18.75%) subjects, music with 3 (9.37%) subjects, and dance with 3 (9.37%) subjects (Martinez 1993, 24).

Table 6. --Occupation and Gender of Biographical Subjects, Current Biography Yearbook.

Gender	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Male	Government/Politics	125	20.90
	Writing	74	12.40
	Music	64	10.70
	Sports	54	9.00
	Acting	53	8.90
	Business	41	6.90
	Film/stage	41	6.90
	Science	40	6.70
	Journalism	19	3.20
	Art	14	2.30
	Organizations	14	2.30
	Entertainer	11	1.80
	Medicine	9	1.50
	Design	7	1.20
	Cartooning	6	1.00
	Dance	6	1.00
	Religion	5	0.80
	Historian	4	0.70
	Law	4	0.70
	Photography	4	0.70
	Education	3	0.50
Total		598	100.00

Table 6.--Continued.

Gender	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Female	Writing	40	19.00
	Acting	31	14.80
	Music	26	12.40
	Government/Politics	24	11.40
	Science	14	6.70
	Journalism	11	5.20
	Film/stage	10	4.80
	Organizations	10	4.80
	Entertainer	9	4.30
	Sports	6	2.90
	Business	5	2.40
	Art	4	1.90
	Design	4	1.90
	Law	4	1.90
	Medicine	4	1.90
	Education	4	1.90
	Cartooning	1	0.50
	Dance	1	0.50
	Historian	1	0.50
	Photography	1	0.50
		----	-------
Total		210	100.00

Newsmakers

Through the use of the chi square test it was determined that there is a significant relationship between the occupation and gender variables in the Newsmakers sample (chi square=64.60; degrees of freedom=19; p=.00; sample size=745). As was the case with the Current Biography Yearbook sample, the male occupation percentages from Newsmakers followed a similar pattern as the total population of Newsmakers, since the male population made up 67.9% of the total sample. The highest numbers of male subjects fell into the following occupations: government/politics 93 (18.4%), sports 83 (16.4%), acting 55 (10.9%), business 45 (8.9%). Female subjects were most numerous in the occupations of: acting 48

(20.1%), government/politics 31 (13.0%), music 26 (10.9%), writing 19 (7.9%). These findings are summarized in Table 7.

When compared to the previous studies of Robinson and Diamond in the 1960s and Martinez in 1970, Newsmakers 1991-1995, like Current Biography Yearbook 1991-1995, shows a different picture of the occupations held by women. The occupations of wife/mistress/mother/daughter/or sister etc. of a famous male and aristocrat/wealthy society woman are both nonexistent in the sample population studied. Also of note, the religious occupation made up a relatively large portion of the female subjects in 1960s studies of Robinson (8%) and Diamond (11%), but was only a very small percentage (0.8%) in the Newsmakers 1991-1995 sample.

Table 7. --Occupation and Gender of Biographical Subjects, Newsmakers.

Gender	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Male	Government/politics	93	18.40
	Sports	83	16.40
	Acting	55	10.90
	Business	45	8.90
	Music	45	8.90
	Entertainer	24	4.70
	Science	23	4.50
	Art	22	4.30
	Film/stage	19	3.80
	Writing	18	3.60
	Journalism	17	3.40
	Religion	15	3.00
	Organization	9	1.80
	Dance	8	1.60
	Design	6	1.20
	Law	6	1.20
	Education	5	1.00
	Photography	5	1.00
	Cartooning	4	0.80
	Medicine	4	0.80
Total		506	100.00

Table 7. -- Continued.

Gender	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Female	Acting	48	20.10
	Government/politics	31	13.00
	Music	26	10.90
	Writing	19	7.90
	Entertainer	15	6.30
	Business	14	5.90
	Sports	14	5.90
	Journalism	13	5.40
	Organizations	11	4.60
	Education	9	3.80
	Science	8	3.30
	Design	6	2.50
	Law	6	2.50
	Art	5	2.10
	Film/stage	4	1.70
	Cartooning	3	1.30
	Medicine	3	1.30
	Religion	2	0.80
	Dance	1	0.40
	Photography	1	0.40
Total		239	100.00

Current Biography vs. Newsmakers

Both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers emphasized the government/politics, acting, and music occupations for both male and female genders. High percentages of males also fell into the occupations of sports and business in both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers. Large percentages of females were found in both Newsmakers and Current Biography Yearbook in the occupation of writing.

Occupation and Race/Ethnic Group of Biographical Subjects

Current Biography Yearbook

Government/politics was the only occupational group in which every racial/ethnic group had representatives. The racial/ethnic group with the most variety amongst the occupational groups was the black group with seventeen of the twenty-one occupation groups represented. This seems logical since the black subjects made up over 50% of the total minority sample. Asians were represented in nine groups, Hispanics were represented in six of the categories, Arabs were found in three groups, Indian/Pakistanis were found in four groups and Native Americans were found only in two occupations. It should also be noted that the government/politics occupation had the largest percentage of subjects for all ethnic/race groups except the black group. The occupation with the largest percentage for blacks was sports with 25 (20.5%) subjects. This was followed by music with 22 (18.0%) subjects, writing with 19 (15.6%) subjects, and government/politics with 17 (13.9%) subjects. Table 8 summarizes the findings for occupation and race in Current Biography Yearbook. With the use of the chi square test it was determined that a there is a significant relationship between occupation and gender in Current Biography Yearbook for the years 1991-1995 (chi square=209.24; degrees of freedom=120; p=.00; sample size=808).

Table 8.--Occupation and Race/Ethnic Group of Biographical Subjects, Current Biography Yearbook.

Race/Ethnic Group	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Blacks	Sports	25	20.50
	Music	22	18.00
	Writing	19	15.60
	Government/politics	17	13.90
	Acting	10	8.20
	Organization	6	4.90
	Film/stage	4	3.30
	Education	3	2.50
	Journalist	3	2.50
	Law	3	2.50
	Business	2	1.60
	Entertainer	2	1.60
	Religion	2	1.60
	Dance	1	0.80
	Medicine	1	0.80
	Photography	1	0.80
	Science	1	0.80
Total		122	100.00
Asian	Government/politics	13	56.50
	Film/stage	2	8.70
	Music	2	8.70
	Design	1	4.30
	Journalism	1	4.30
	Organization	1	4.30
	Religion	1	4.30
	Sports	1	4.30
	Writing	1	4.30
Total		23	100.00
Hispanic	Government/politics	5	35.70
	Music	3	21.40
	Acting	2	14.30
	Sports	2	14.30
	Film/stage	1	7.10
	Organization	1	7.10
Total		14	100.00
Arab	Government/politics	8	80.00
	Education	1	10.00
	Organization	1	10.00
Total		10	100.00

27.

Table 8. --Continued.

Race/Ethnic Group	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Indian/Pakistani	Film/stage	2	40.00
	Government/politics	1	20.00
	Medicine	1	20.00
	Writing	1	20.00
Total		5	100.00
Native American	Government/politics	1	50.00
	Organization	1	50.00
Total		2	100.00

Newsmakers

As was the case in the Current Biography Yearbook sample, Newsmakers tended to place importance on the occupation of government/politics. Representatives from every ethnic/racial group, with the exception of Native Americans, were found in the government/politics occupation. The Hispanic group had 9 (40.9%) of its subjects in government/politics, the Asian group had 6 (35.3%) subjects in the occupation of government/politics and the Arab group had 4 (57.1%) subjects in the occupation of government/politics. For blacks, the occupation with the largest number of subjects was sports with 35 (36.1%) subjects, for Indian/Pakistanis the largest occupational group was writing with 2 (40%) subjects, and for the Native American group, the acting occupation was the largest with 2 (66.7%) subjects. Once again the black group was the racial/ethnic group with the most variety in occupations, which follows since they made up over 50% of the minority sample. Fourteen out of twenty groups were represented by black subjects. Hispanics were found in nine occupational groups, Asians were found in eight

groups, Arabs and Indian/Pakistanis were each found in four groups, and Native Americans were found in two groups. Table 9 summarizes the findings for occupation and race in Newsmakers. The result of the chi square test for the variables of occupation and race signifies a relationship between occupation and race in Newsmakers 1991-1995 (chi square=221.72; degrees of freedom=114; p=.00; sample size=745).

Table 9.--Occupation and Race/Ethnic Group of Biographical Subjects, Newsmakers.

Race	Occupation	Number	Percentage
Black	Sports	35	36.10
	Music	15	15.50
	Government/politics	17	17.50
	Acting	7	7.20
	Dance	3	3.10
	Organization	3	3.10
	Science	3	3.10
	Writing	4	4.10
	Education	2	2.10
	Entertainer	2	2.10
	Law	2	2.10
	Religion	2	2.10
	Film/stage	1	1.00
	Journalism	1	1.00
Total		97	100.00
Hispanic	Government/politics	9	40.90
	Sports	4	18.20
	Art	3	13.60
	Acting	1	4.50
	Entertainer	1	4.50
	Music	1	4.50
	Organization	1	4.50
	Photography	1	4.50
	Writing	1	4.50
Total		22	100.00
Asian	Government/politics	6	35.30
	Organization	3	17.60
	Design	2	11.80

Table 9. --Continued.

Race/Ethnic Group	Occupation	Number	Percentage
	Film/stage	2	11.80
	Art	1	5.90
	Entertainer	1	5.90
	Law	1	5.90
	Sports	1	5.90
		17	100.00
Arab	Government/politics	4	57.10
	Business	1	14.30
	Education	1	14.30
	Religion	1	14.30
Total		7	100.00
Indian/Pakistani	Writing	2	40.00
	Government/politics	1	20.00
	Music	1	20.00
	Religion	1	20.00
		7	100.00
Native American	Acting	2	66.70
	Organization	1	33.30
Total		3	100.00

Current Biography vs. Newsmakers

In both of these works, the black ethnic/racial group was best represented, followed by the Asian, Indian/Pakistani, and then the Arab group. The Native American subjects received the lowest percentage. Even though black subjects as a group had the highest percentage of representatives, the subjects were most likely to represent the sports occupation, rather than the most popular occupation amongst all groups, which was government/politics. Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers both had relatively large percentages of black subjects in the

occupations of sports, music, and government/politics. For the other minority groups the numbers of subjects were too small to make correlations.

Current Biography Yearbook 1991 vs. Current Biography Yearbook 1995

In 1991, Current Biography Yearbook contained 124 (77.5%) biographies about male subjects and 36 (22.5%) biographies about female subjects. In 1995, 118 (75.2%) of the biographies were about male subjects and 39 (24.8%) female subjects were included. These findings are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10. --Gender of Biographical Subjects, by Current Biography Yearbook Volume.

Volume	Gender	Number	Percentage
1991	Male	124	77.50
	Female	36	22.50
Total		160	100.00
1995	Male	118	75.20
	Female	39	24.80
Total		157	100.00

Subjects from racial/ethnic groups other than white make up only 18% of the total sample in 1991 and 23% of the sample in 1995. Both in 1991 and 1995, the most numerous ethnic/racial group was the white group with 131 (81.9%) subjects and 121 (77.1%) subjects respectively. The black group was the second most numerous group in both volumes, and was also the group that showed the most change from the 1991 volume to the 1995 volume. In 1991, the black group was made up of 17 (10.6%) subjects and in 1995, 28 (17.8%) subjects were black. These findings are

summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. --Race/Ethnic Group of Biographical Subjects, by Current Biography Yearbook Volume.

Volume	Race/Ethnic Group	Number	Percentage
1991	White	131	81.90
	Black	17	10.60
	Hispanic	5	3.10
	Arab	4	2.50
	Asian	3	1.90
Total		160	100.00
1995	White	121	77.10
	Black	28	17.80
	Asian	5	3.20
	Hispanic	2	1.30
	Pakistani/Indian	1	0.60
Total		157	100.00

V. Discussion

Generally speaking, both of these collective biographical works emphasized white male biographical subjects living in the United States or Western Europe, who were involved in the occupations of government/politics, writing, music or sports. This result echoes the results of similar studies that have been done in order to evaluate the ability of biographical materials to serve the needs of the diverse culture of library users. Other studies determined that biographies written for adults and children, and encyclopedia entries have been found to be culturally and sexually biased. Racial and ethnic minority groups, people of the non-Western world, women and those people involved in less acclaimed occupations receive less attention and recognition as a result of exclusion from these sources. In fact "these omissions are of prime importance for they tell the clientele that whatever is absent is not part of the Great Tradition, has no bearing on or relevance to his status as American" (Dickeman 1973, 614). In other words, the problem is not necessarily who is being included in these sources, but who is not being included in these sources.

Although Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers were found to have similar coverage of biographical subjects in regards to the variables of gender, race, occupation, and geographical setting, that does not mean that these sources are providing an accurate picture of the people that make up our society and the contributions that they are making. Females made up 51.2% of the population during the years 1991-1995 and are therefore underrepresented in both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1995, 14). Also,

while the Hispanic population made up 9% of the United States population in 1992, Hispanic subjects made up only 1.7% of the subjects in Current Biography Yearbook for the years 1991-1995 and 3.0% of the subjects in Newsmakers for the years 1991-1995 (Carton 1993, 3). Another shortcoming of these works is the lack of variety in occupations for subjects of non-white ethnic/racial groups. This, of course, is due to the small number of non-white subjects that are covered by these works. Even so "the lack of variety in the occupations of the subjects ... presents a distorted view of the contributions people are making to society" (Diamond 1991,30).

It does appear that progress is being made in certain areas. One such area is in the case of the black race/ethnic group. According to the Census population in 1992 blacks made up 12% of the total American population (Carton 1993, 3). For the years 1991-1995, blacks made up 15.1% of the subjects in Current Biography Yearbook and in Newsmakers blacks made up 13.0% of the subjects for the same five years. These percentages are higher and appear to be more equitable to the actual black population than those that were found by Robinson in the 1960s biography reviews (6.0%), Diamond in the 1960s biography reviews (2.05%) and Martinez in Current Biography Yearbook 1970 (5.95%). However, it is curious that unlike most of the other race/ethnic groups, the most popular occupation of the black subjects included in Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers is sports, rather than government/politics.

Another area where definite progress is being made is in the types of occupations that are held by women. Previous researchers found that the most popular occupations for women were wife/mistress/mother/sister of a famous male and aristocrat/wealthy society woman. These occupations were nonexistent in both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers for the years 1991-1995, and were replaced by writing, acting, government/politics and music. Also, even though

female subjects do not have representation in these works that is equal to their representation in population, more females are being included than were in the past.

Public libraries were founded on the ideal of free access to information for all members of the community. Census predictions indicate that the population of the United States will continue to diversify, and that by the year 2050, the white population will constitute 53% of the population as compared to 75% in 1992 (Carton 1993, 3). For libraries, this population shift means that the issue of multiculturalism is not irrelevant, and may become more prominent with the passing of time. Comparisons of biographical subject studies from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, with more recent studies from the 1990s, indicate that publishers have begun to respond to the challenge of providing a more diverse collection of biographical subjects. However, the response has developed slowly, as evidenced by the comparison of the 1991 and 1995 volumes of Current Biography Yearbook, both of which focused heavily on white male subjects. Another aspect of cultural diversity that should be considered is geographic setting. Both Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers individually claim in introductory material that biographical subjects from around the world are included in these sources. This claim seems to be more of a goal, at this point, than reality, since most of the subjects in this study were from the United States and Europe.

As a result, the responsibility of providing a diverse collection of biographies falls onto librarians. Rather than rely on standard reference works such as Current Biography Yearbook and Newsmakers, librarians need to think more creatively about how they might include and promote the use of other resources that are not traditionally biographical. These include materials, such as periodicals and historical works and services, such as interlibrary loan. Also, librarians should continue to

build collections that serve the needs of a multicultural population. This type of collection development may involve more effort on the part of the librarians since materials that are multicultural may not be readily available. Librarians must look to small and alternative presses for information on publications that may not always be documented in traditional bibliographic tools or the standard professional literature (Bostic 1995).

In the process of selecting materials that will serve a multicultural population, librarians must also be sure that quality is not sacrificed for quantity. Materials should not be selected solely because they contain people of other races or because they deal with women. Materials should be selected because they provide useful, accurate and appropriate information. All users will benefit from the selection of materials that counteract racism and sexism. Rather than simply reflect demographics, library materials should "acquaint [people] with the rich diversity of the nation and world" and as a result, through collection development librarians can provide people "with an invaluable legacy of cultural understanding" (Bostic 1995, 216).

Librarians have a great responsibility of providing, selecting and retrieving information for patrons. In the past it seems as though this responsibility may not have been realized, since standard reference works and other biographical materials have been shown to provide a less than an accurate picture of our country. Now that this inadequacy has been realized, librarians have an even greater responsibility of resolving the inadequacy. As librarians learn to look beyond themselves, and to the population as a whole, the needs of library users will be met more effectively, and they will be given a more accurate picture of the world, which can lead to a much needed understanding between cultures, genders and humanity.

Topics for Further Research

In this study it was determined through the use of the chi square test that relationships exist between the variables studied. Further research might analyze the strength of the relationships and the exact nature of the relationships. Relationships that might be considered include: work and gender, work and race, work and geographical setting, work and occupation, occupation/gender by work and occupation/gender by work.

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